

Memories of Moira



Moira Ann Hearn (1949 - 2012)

In an unprecedented outpouring of sorrow and grief, an industry legend has passed away, far too soon. The respect and love shown for Moira Hearn's memory was instant from all corners of the planet. This special edition of SiteLines is dedicated to sharing some of the huge esteem in which Moira was held here in Canada, in UK/Ireland, and around the globe.

By talking to countless friends and colleagues, there were clearly 'Moira Moments', special to her, but so indicative of her as a person and as a business colleague. Moira's passion for the meetings and incentives industry was boundless, and she quickly established special rapport with everyone she met. She was dignified and caring, totally professional, yet a formidable foe in driving for better business results, and always insisting on ethical practices to do what was right. Her ability to manage difficult situations was legendary. Nonetheless, Moira was always personable, a sensitive and stalwart mentor, always giving of herself with thoughtful and practical advice. All this belied a mischievous sense of humour; Moira certainly knew how to laugh and smile. She had a long standing love for the arts, whether it was live theatre, classical music, comedy, or the opera. Above all, she was humble, and always put others before herself, and has created a legacy that will truly stand the test of time.

On a swelteringly hot afternoon Monday, July 16th over 250 people packed Rosedale United Church in Toronto to pay their last respects to Moira. Many had traveled from far afield including London, Dublin, Bermuda, New Orleans and New York.

The poignant memorial service of verse, sayings, music, and prayer celebrated her life; a time to grieve, a time to reflect, a time to share, and a time to laugh. Some of Moira's family and closest friends contributed to provide a meaningful gaze into her life, and her driving passions. Comments like 'peace maker' in overcoming challenging business deals with old fashioned values, like 'soul friend' for her ability to connect with everyone she met, 'don't procrastinate' for her ability to get on with things, and 'enjoy each moment' for her ability to laugh and smile despite her brave fight with a long and unpredictable illness, which ultimately claimed her life. Lighter moments were recalled of a trip to the peace and tranquillity of a cottage by the lake, where suddenly, construction workers descended next door to clatter around with tools and machinery. Moira's solution... when life gets difficult, 'put the kettle on for tea' and look after the workers. Another was of a trip to Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto to see Eric Idle of Monty Python fame. Moira enjoyed every moment, laughed along raucously at the humour, and internalized those immortal words, which bear repeating... *Always look on the bright side of life...*

A moving way for the assembled gathering to weep, to laugh, and to remember Moira.

Even as the congregation transitioned from the memorial service to a reception, there was one last typical 'Moira Moment'... everyone was greeted with a gin & tonic, and treated to a selection of finger sandwiches served on tiered platters, scones with jam and clotted cream, and miniature iced cakes and, of course, a selection of teas... Oh, so perfect for the weather; Oh, so English; Oh, so Moira!

The tributes to Moira that follow are stunning in their insights and love for this remarkable lady. For each one shared here, there are hundreds more from friends, business partners, and industry colleagues around the world that everyone feels in their hearts. Do read on, your soul will be stirred. If only each of us could emulate some of the qualities that Moira had, we would all be richer for them.

A message from Alejandro Verzoub, President, Site Global

Dear Site Members,

It is with sadness that I share the news that Moira Hearn, a great supporter and advocate for Site, passed away on 6 July. Moira was a respected leader in the motivational events industry for more than 40 years, of which the last 28 years were spent in the Canadian meeting and incentive travel industry as principal of Select Group Marketing.



Moira joined Site in 1984 and was active in the formation and development of the Canadian Chapter, of which she was a Past President. She held the Canadian seat as a member of Site's International Board of Directors for six years, 1995-2000 inclusive, holding various positions on the Board and Executive Committee. She also chaired various international committees as well as being Site's representative to the Industry Liaison Council and a member of several Site task force projects. Over the past few years Moira shared her industry knowledge and expertise as a mentor and presenter at numerous Site educational conferences.

Moira will be greatly missed by her Site friends and colleagues around the world. She was everyone's "Auntie" and was loved and respected in our industry. Site will be establishing a memorial to honor and recognize Moira's achievements and contributions to the association.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Verzoub, Site President

Moira Hearn: a Site Canada Pioneer

We are deeply saddened to announce the death of one of Site Canada's long standing members, Moira Hearn. Moira passed away peacefully on Friday evening July 6th, after a long and courageous battle with Cushing's Disease.

Moira joined Site in 1984 and was instrumental in setting up the Canadian chapter, where she was elected President in 1991. After establishing the Chapter, Moira joined the Site International Board where she remained active throughout her career.

I was attending a Site Florida event in Orlando when the news of her death came through. Many of Moira's Site colleagues from the international community are truly saddened by our loss. I received many condolences from her friends, those she mentored, and those with whom she worked on several international committees. They, like ourselves, are at a loss. Moira was always available to provide advice to fellow members and willing to share her knowledge so freely. I really don't think Moira truly knew how many people she touched.

We will miss her support, guidance, mentorship, laughter and friendship.

Our community is in mourning... hugs to each of you who had the pleasure of knowing this amazing woman!

Joanne Keating, President, Site Canada



Moira Hearn: A Personal Tribute

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core*

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree", W.B Yeats

Moira would appreciate these words on so many levels. They would certainly appeal to her robust intellect. She would understand their deeper meaning and get Yeats' use of water as a metaphor for the transcendent. Her heart, too, would delight in the sound of the words, their soft rise and fall, their lilting musicality. Most of all, these words would touch and caress Moira's soul. They would give her great satisfaction, comfort and hope.



Moira with Padraic and Rita Gilligan, Montreux, Switzerland

I first met Moira in 1994, almost 20 years ago, when we started Delaney Marketing. She worked with us from the get-go and helped us navigate through the early days with her legendary briefings, generous nurturing, endless patience and eye twinkling wit. She played a key role in all our milestone moments as Delaney Marketing became Ovation Group and finally Ovation Global DMC. She brought her fiercely loyal Canadian clients to us, first in Ireland, and then to other Ovation locations. Ever the bridge builder, the Boutros Boutros Ghali of the Meetings and Incentives Industry, Moira consistently ensured that peace ruled supreme between demanding clients and recalcitrant DMCs. How many miraculous solutions were brokered by Moira with timely late night or weekend phone calls?

I'll miss Moira greatly. I'll miss the breakfast meetings at the Egg Diner in Chicago during IT&ME when she would bring along her famous list, the agenda topics that needed to be dealt with in a face to face setting. Pat and I would listen as she'd find the kindest, most discreet ways to let us know we weren't performing and what needed to be improved. Somewhere in the midst of the discussion annual fees would be aired and discussed but only really as an after-thought for Moira wasn't in it for the money.

I'll miss Moira's great thirst for knowledge. During Site International Conferences or Ovation Summits when you'd be in St Petersburg or Prague or Paris, she'd have her list of places to visit, specific paintings she wanted to view, concerts or operas she wanted to attend. We shared the joyful exuberance of Jersey Boys together last October at The Palazzo in Las Vegas. She never took the privileges of our industry for granted and immersed herself in each new experience, delighting in what she could learn.

I'll miss Moira's empathy, her big-hearted generosity, her extraordinary kindness. She filed away in her heart all the bits and pieces of so many lives – immediate family, industry colleagues, friends. She knew how to spell the names of all my children and followed their progress with genuine interest and concern. Her quiet gentleness was balanced, however, by a deep passion for doing the right thing both in business and in life. She had no time for unethical behaviour and was scathing of double standards. In this regard she was a perfect member of the Site ethical committee, a silent, behind-the-scenes, zero-profile role she played diligently for years.

Most of all, I'll miss Moira's beautiful soul. In a pathologically extrovert industry, full of bright lights and shiny surfaces, Moira's soul shone from the inside-out. She could network expertly with a gin and tonic in her hand and dance around the show floor of the trade shows with the best of them but she was always steered by a real sense of her own dignity, by enduring human values and by a deep desire to build meaningful, lasting, genuine relationships. Amidst the noise and clatter, the sound and the fury Moira always heard the "lake water lapping... in her deep heart's core".

Ar dheis De go raibh an h-anam dilis [Irish: May her faithful soul sit at God's right hand]

Padraic Gilligan is VP, Ovation Global DMC. Ovation has worked with Moira's company Select Group Marketing since 1994.

Moira: Chronicles of a True Professional... the press shares the grief

The Canadian meetings industry was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Moira Hearn, president and founder of Select Group Marketing, on July 6.

Moira graduated from what is now Thames Valley University, in Ealing, London, England, after studying there from 1965-67. After graduation, she worked at various hotels in Britain, Bermuda and Canada, including five years with Marriott Hotels & Resorts' Canadian National Sales office, reaching the position of National Sales Director.

On the closure of the Marriott National Sales Office, Moira founded Select Group Marketing (SGM), in Toronto, in 1987. At the time, it was the first such organization, based in Canada, specializing exclusively in representing Destination Management Companies to the Canadian meeting and incentive industry.

In the 1980s, Moira was part of a core industry group that supported the establishment of a Canadian chapter of Site. Once incorporated, the Canadian chapter faltered, and Moira was one of the three people who became actively involved to get the chapter going.

In 1991, Moira became Site Canada Chapter President, after two years as vice-president. She was subsequently invited to take part in a major task force about the future of the organization, providing a Canadian voice in the development of Site internationally.

Over her 20+ years in the meetings industry, Moira was a strong advocate for the Canadian MICE market, and built SGM into a powerhouse, representing a portfolio of leading destination management companies operating in over 20 countries.

She was also a tireless support of Meetings + Incentive Travel magazine, exhibiting, with SGM, at the very first IncentiveWorks show (then called CMITS) and in every IncentiveWorks since.

Don Douloff, Editor, M+IT Magazine

Moira, we miss you more than you can imagine. You have been an advisor, confidant, constructive critic and staunch supporter of all our past and present initiatives. But that is not why we loved you. We loved you because of your warmth, honesty, loving and caring way. We will miss you and your friendship immensely. You were an "original" and can never be replaced. God Bless.

Richard Elliott and Debbie van der Beek, Co-Publishers, Ignite magazine

Mourning the Loss of a Dear Friend and Colleague... the world speaks as one:

Moira will be long remembered, respected and loved for many things:

- Her fierce conviction of what is right and proper, tempered with an exceptional open-mindedness, ever willing to listen to every point of view and see things from every angle.
- Her strong pride in being British, tempered with a passionate love for her adopted city and country.
- Her strong sense of leadership, yet modest humility, preferring to encourage from behind, rather than claim the limelight at the front. How many of us have been mentored by Moira or sought her advice, at whatever stage in our careers, whether as a first-timer or seasoned veteran?
- Her boundless knowledge of and belief in the incentive product – understanding both the client's point of view and the supplier's, with an ability to moderate and mediate between all sides with wisdom and impartiality, that garnered trust, respect and confidence from all sides.
- Her sense of gravitas tempered with the wickedest sense of humour.

Moira had that rare gift of knowing when to listen and when to speak – and no matter what the subject, she always had a wise and profound word to say that was considered and gracious, forthright yet diplomatic, always balanced with good humour and humanity

Wendy Moffat, Chairman of the Board, SPECTRA, London, UK

"Moira was a very special lady and will never be forgotten. Her warmth, her smile and sense of fun shone through on all who met her. We enjoyed a very special relationship which went beyond the business. She offered advice, encouragement and guidance throughout my career and always had that special gift of looking at situations in a different light. She was the oracle in Canada and there was little she didn't know was going on in her "patch" and was very protective yet discreet about her inside knowledge of the Canada MICE industry. Her passion for our industry was unquestionable and she put others before herself at all times. She devoted a great deal of her time to SITE and played an integral part in building the Canada Chapter to what it is today. We found time to meet up at every trade show we attended (she stored several pairs of her shoes in our booth locker to suit all types of carpet density and hour of the day!) and as she passed through London on her way to visit family and friends in the UK, she always found time to visit the Spectra offices calling in "put the kettle on" and enjoyed our staff Christmas events. She was part of the Spectra family in every way and we shall miss her greatly".

Paul Miller, Managing Director, SPECTRA, London, UK



Moira with Paul Miller and Wendy Moffat

Moira had remarkable personal integrity in everything that she did. She was a quiet and upright leader, a sensitive and stalwart mentor, a passionate advocate, a secret keeper, a dispenser of wisdom and wit, a wise and patient comrade-in-arms, and a kind and gently bred lady. There is a space in the universe now that will never be filled.

Bonnie Boyd, BBC, New Orleans, LA

Seeing Moira at Incentive Works each year was the highlight of the week; she had so many friends who love her, she was just the warmest and most understanding colleague to work with, and her client parties were the best. And who can forget her laugh!

Kim Bradford, Orient Express Hotels, Charleston, SC

The Portugal Team is saddened by the loss of a very dear friend, a great partner and true professional. Moira will always live in our hearts.

Eduarda and the Portugal Team

We will always remember Moira as an exceptional person and industry leader. We shall miss her friendship, caring, wisdom, and cheerful strong personality. My condolences to all her family and friends. Rest in peace my friend.

Tasso Pappas, Athens, Greece

Moira always exemplified professionalism, whether one on one, or as she brought around her travel partners. Her demeanour radiated her positive, calm character. She and I, although we did not get together as often as we both would have liked, had a bond brought on by not just the years we both invested in this industry and being entrepreneurs, but also by some of the illness that surrounded us. A huge loss to all. Why do the good die so young?

Don Brommet

Moira was one of the founders of Site Canada and over the years I've had the pleasure of being Moira's client and colleague. Her passion and dedication to the incentive industry was evident in all that she did. From her business to giving so willingly to support the industry and colleagues, she exuded commitment and devotion. We have not only lost a colleague but a partner and a friend to a lot of people in this industry.

Maria da Cunha

Moira, you were always dignified and professional, and always a lady. Regardless of the situation, you never lowered your exemplary values. You provided guidance, encouragement and sometimes just a knowing smile, as I followed your footsteps at Site Canada, and then, at Site International. I greatly valued your opinion, your knowledge and your friendship, and I shall miss our long telephone chats.

Morag Donald

Moira will be an icon in the destination management industry forever. She could easily be your toughest competition, yet an incredibly loving friend, all on the very same day. Through her, people and partners from around the world came together and formed an endless line of special relationships – that was one of her greatest talents, and also one of her greatest gifts to all she leaves behind. Thank you for everything, Moira.

Tracey Brenneman

Moira was an incredible mentor; her commitment to Site and our industry was remarkable. I enjoyed my talks with her at our Site meetings and Global conferences. She was such a wealth of knowledge, always willing to assist and provide insight with any questions I ever had with Site. When I first joined Site, Moira was very kind and welcoming to me. I will always remember her kindness and sincerity. She touched so many lives and we will miss her greatly. God Bless her.

Liz Akey

We have lost a great friend. A woman who would never been seen without a smile or some words of wisdom. She was always willing to sit and truly ask how we were doing, and to offer a hug when things were good or bad. She was a mentor, friend, an inspiration to us all, and she will be missed. On a trip to Russia a few years back, Moira was the first one up and the last one to say goodnight, and introduced us to so many wonderful places and experiences. Because of her, the Subway System in Moscow became a magical place to visit. It was in the small details. Rest in Peace, our good friend, we will miss you.

Dana Warren and the Maritz Team

Moira Hearn was an icon in our industry. I loved her positive attitude both in business and in her life. She was a trusted supplier and friend. Her expertise was beyond reproach. I loved our chats about business and life, that we would have three or four times a year. She knew how to laugh, in a business and world that requires it. Moira understood the value of relationship, that your word was your bond and respect for all people was important above all else. I will miss her very much and never forget her.

Bernie Koth, co-President, Partner, Wynford



Moira Hearn... What can be said, so much fun, great hearted, brilliant, super service oriented, and, so very professional. Her loyalty and dedication to her customers was never ending! I will never forget Wynford's first open house in 1986, as businesses are in their start-up period. We were pared down, and situated on top of a strip mall, with our fake panelling and our brown carpet and jerry-rigged furniture, and, our one client. Of the 4 suppliers who believed in us and visited us that day, Moira Hearn arrived with so much positive belief in our company and a potted plant. When so many others said "who's Wynford", she believed and went out of her way to show it...

Deb Niven, co-President, Partner, Wynford

This industry has just a few "giants" and we just lost one. Moira is one of the reasons I fell in love with the incentive side of our business. We are all better because we knew her.

Rita Plaskett, President, AGENDUM

Moira was the epitome of a passionate leader in our industry – a true professional. Always happy to discuss issues, events, or have a simple conversation. I enjoyed the times that we were seated at the same table at industry functions which allowed me to listen to her stories of her around the world excursions. She will truly be missed by all...

Susan Bernad

Moira was a rare and wonderful, generous colleague with great passion and knowledge and warmth and joy. I had the pleasure of knowing her just the past three years, but she was always warm and welcoming. She will be missed.

Tom Ernsting

Moira Hearn... many people think of me as a veteran of the industry, well let's face it I have been around for a while, but Moira was not only a veteran, but a champion, a professional, a successful catalyst who put the Canadian Market on the map in terms of the world taking us as buyers seriously... I will miss you.

Chris Warren

After many years, I left our industry in 2002 and pursued other interests (marketing / advertising); in 2005, I realized I was not happy and wanted to come back. Moira was one of the first I reached out to; she took time to meet me for lunch, and, with her support and encouragement, helped me back into this world of ours. Something I've never forgotten, nor will I ever.

Mary Pepe

Dear Moira, It was always nice to see you at industry events and reminisce about the early days of SITE in Canada.

Take care and rest in peace.

Tom Ebner, Vancouver, BC

My condolences to Moira's family and especially to the Select Group Marketing family, of which I was but a brief member. Moira was the kind of friend you could see but occasionally and pick up the conversation where it was left off. I always marveled at her enthusiasm and joie de vivre, her professionalism and her integrity. Her visits to my home in Mont-Tremblant were always such a great treat. We've all lost such a lovely soul. Adieu, Moira.

Suzanne Bernardin, Mont-Tremblant, Quebec

EPILOGUE: Moira: My Eulogy

If I'm only half as respected as Moira... I'll consider myself tremendously successful... and one very lucky individual.

I first met Moira Hearn of Select Group Marketing in late 1994... post CMITS (now Incentive Works) and planning for the 1995 show. For reasons unknown to me at the time, she adopted me into her flock. For over 17 years we swore and promised we would do lunch...and it didn't happen until after I left M+IT/Incentive Works in Feb 2011. True to her word, we went for lunch... and Moira was still looking out for me even when I couldn't directly help her professional goals - she was that kind a human being.

We had some great laughs and adventures but make no mistake... Moira gave me a piece of her mind when she felt compelled; however it was always with constructive criticism for the growth and development of Incentive Works and the industry (and a little mentorship for me too).

I didn't know Moira before the mid-90's and her accomplishments. We never socialized outside of work. Regardless, Moira was one of those special people I would take a bullet for... and sadly the bullet that got her was one that no one else could step in front of.

To this day, the greatest lesson Moira demonstrated to me was that a strong relationship is only a phone call away. Not email, not fax, not Skype... a phone call. Moira was the original social media... making connections and relationships in and out of her immediate circles... backed up with a hand shake followed closely with a big hug.

Moira... if you're reading this, thank you for being my friend. I'll miss you tremendously.

Until next time

Steve Dempsey, The Steve Report, M+IT

Great lesson from Moira - expect a flood of calls soon, Steve! Moira was like the Aunt who never missed a family reunion... it won't be the same without seeing her at MPI, SITE, IncentiveWorks, etc. She'll be greatly missed by so many.

Yvonne Dewar



So respected, so loved... many other tributes to Moira appear in the Toronto Star

<http://www.legacy.com/guestbook/thestar/guestbook.aspx?n=moira-hearn&pid=158487435&page=6&sort=1>